

§
New York Society for promotin^g the manu-
mission of slaves.

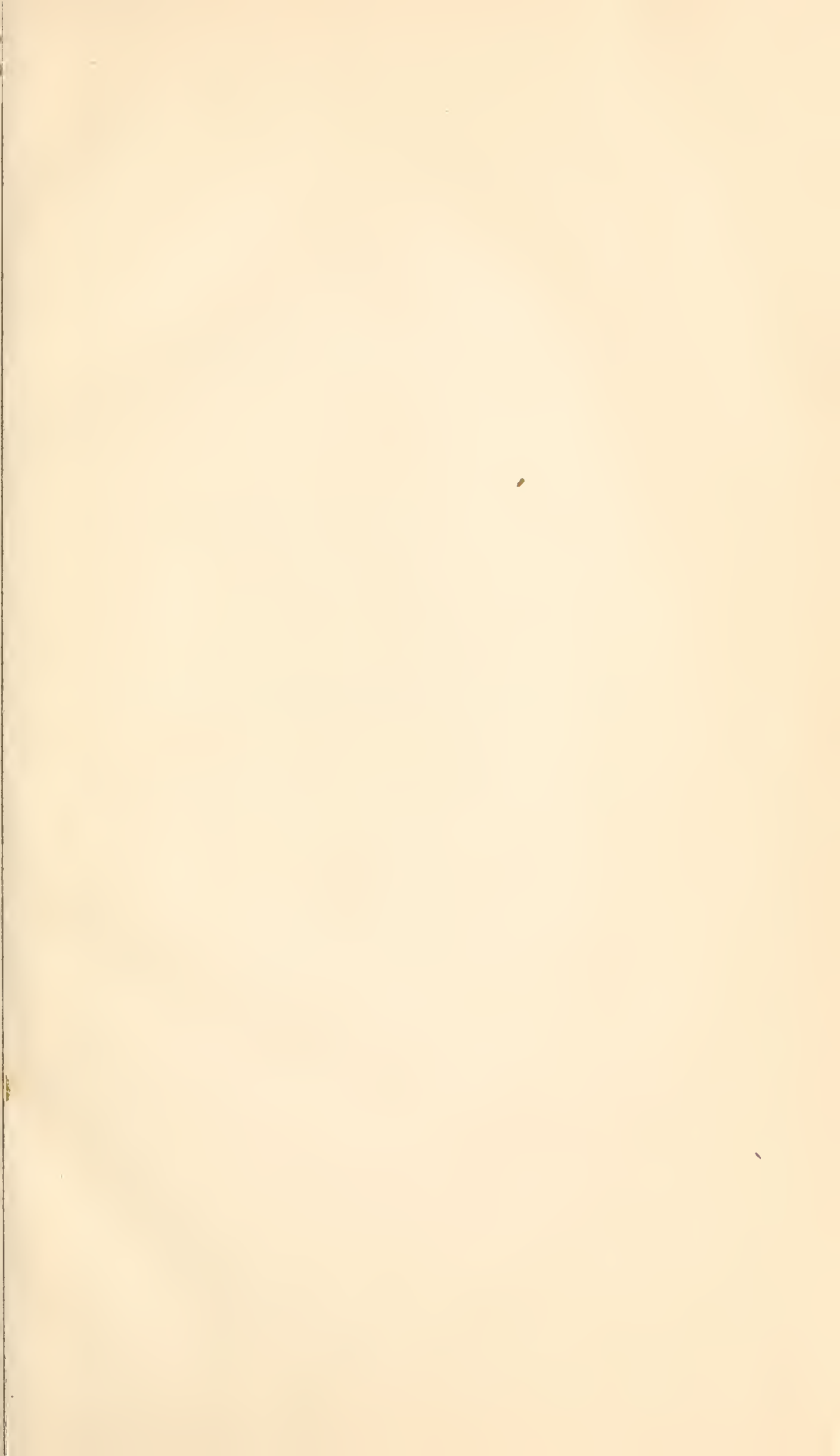
The Act of incorporation and consti-
tution. 1810.





Class F 498

Book 1850



THE
ACT OF INCORPORATION,
AND
CONSTITUTION
OF
THE NEW-YORK SOCIETY,
FOR PROMOTING THE

Manumission of Slaves,

AND PROTECTING SUCH OF THEM AS HAVE BEEN, OR MAY
BE LIBERATED.

Revised and adopted, 31st. January, 1809.

WITH THE BYE-LAWS OF THE SOCIETY ANNEXED.

New-York:

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AN ACT,

To incorporate the Society, formed in the State of New-York, for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and protecting such of them as have been or may be liberated.

Passed February 19, 1808.

CONTENTS.

1. Society incorporated—2. Style—3, 5. Powers—4. Estate—6. Bye-Laws.
7. Officers of the society—8. Present ones how long to continue in office.
9. Act public—10. How long to continue in force.

WHEREAS a voluntary association has for many years past existed in this state, by the name of “The New-York society for promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of them as have been or may be liberated ;” and whereas the said society has represented to the legislature, that besides its exertions to further the humane intentions of the legislature, by aiding the operations of the just and salutary laws passed for the gradual abolition of slavery in this state, it has established a free school in the city of New-York, for the education of the children of such persons as have been liberated from bondage, that they may hereafter become useful members of the community ; and whereas the said society has prayed to be incorporated, that it may be enabled more effectually to support the said school, and to fulfil the benevolent purposes of its association : Therefore,

I. *Be it enacted by the People of the State of New-York, represented in Senate and Assembly,* That Samuel Latham Mitchell, Valentine Seaman, Robert Bowne, Walter Morton, Charles Collins, John Murray, junior, Christopher M. Slocum, Nehemiah Allen, Joshua Underhill, William S. Burling, Egbert Benson, Peter Jay Munro, Elisha W. King, William Johnson, Thomas Eddy, William Lawrence, and their associates, who now are, and such other persons as shall hereafter become members of the said society, shall be and are hereby ordained, con- 1

stituted and declared to be one body corporate and politic, in
 2 fact and in name, by the name of "The New-York society for
 promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of
 3 them as have been or may be liberated;" and that by that name
 they and their successors for ever hereafter shall and may have
 succession, and by the same name be capable in law to sue and
 be sued, implead and be impleaded, answer and be answered un-
 to, defend and be defended in all courts of law and equity, in
 all manner of actions, suits, complaints and matters whatsoever;
 and that they and their successors may have a common seal,
 and the same break, alter, change and renew at their pleasure;
 and by the same name shall be forever hereafter capable in the
 law to purchase, take, hold, receive and enjoy, to them and their
 successors, any lands, tenements, hereditaments, goods, chat-
 tels or estate, real or personal of whatsoever nature or quality,
 in fee simple or for life or lives, or for years, or in any other
 4 manner howsoever: *Provided always*, That the yearly income
 or value of the said real and personal estate, do not at any time
 exceed the sum of two thousand dollars, current money of the
 state of New-York; and they and their successors, by the same
 name, shall have full power and authority to give, grant, bargain,
 sell, demise, release, and convey to others, the whole or any
 part of such real or personal estate, on such terms, and in such
 manner and form as the said society may judge most advanta-
 5 geous for the promotion of their institution; and that they and
 their successors shall have power, from time to time, to abolish
 any of the offices or appointments hereinafter mentioned, and
 create others in the room thereof, with such powers and duties
 6 as they shall think fit; and shall have power, from time to time,
 to make, constitute, ordain and establish such bye-laws, constitu-
 tions, ordinances and regulations as they shall judge proper for
 the election of officers, the election and admission of new mem-
 bers, for the government and regulation of the officers and mem-
 bers, for fixing the times and places of the meetings of the said
 corporation, and for conducting and regulating all the affairs and
 business of the said corporation, and from time to time to alter,
 change, repeal, revoke, and annul the same at their pleasure:
Provided also, That such bye-laws, rules, orders and regulations
 to be made by the said corporation, shall not be repugnant to
 the constitution and laws of the United States, or of this state.

7 II. *And be it further enacted*, That the officers of the said
 corporation, until otherwise ordained by the said corporation
 shall consist of one president, two vice-presidents, one secreta-
 ry, one assistant secretary, and one treasurer, who shall be keep-
 er of the common seal of the said corporation, one register, a

chairman of the standing committee, a chairman of the board of trustees of the school, four counsellors, a chairman of the committee of correspondence ; and that until the third Tuesday of January next, and till others shall be chosen in their places, the present officers, and all and every the committees and trustees of the said school last appointed by the said society, shall be and continue to be the officers and the committees and trustees of the said corporation ; and the said committees and trustees shall report to and account with the same, in the same manner as if they were to be appointed in pursuance of the powers vested in the said corporation by this act. 8

III. *And be it further enacted*, That this act shall be and hereby is declared to be a public act, and shall be construed most favourably to effectuate the purposes hereby intended, and that no misnomer of the said corporation in any deed, will, testament, gift, grant, demise or other instrument of contract or conveyance shall vitiate or defeat the same : *Provided*, the corporation shall be sufficiently described to ascertain the intention of the parties. 9

IV. *And be it further enacted*, That this act shall continue and be in force for the term of fifteen years : *Provided nevertheless*, that in case this corporation shall at any time divert from or appropriate its funds or any part of its funds, to any purpose or purposes other than those intended and contemplated by this act, that henceforth the said corporation shall cease and determine, and the estate, real and personal, whereof it may then be seized and possessed, shall vest in the people of this state : *Provided*, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the legislature at any time, within the period aforesaid, and in their discretion, to pass a law altering or repealing this act. 10

THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
NEW-YORK SOCIETY,
FOR PROMOTING THE
Manumission of Slaves,
AND PROTECTING SUCH OF THEM AS HAVE BEEN OR MAY
BE LIBERATED.

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THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
NEW-YORK SOCIETY, &c.

In conformity to the preceding act of incorporation, the following articles are declared to be the Constitution of "*The New-York Society, for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be, liberated.*"

ARTICLE I.

1. The Society, annually, on the third Tuesday of January, shall elect, by a majority of votes, taken by ballot, the following officers, viz. A President, 1st. Vice-President, 2d. Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Register, Chairman of the standing Committee, Secretary of the standing Committee, Chairman of the board of Trustees of the School, Secretary to the board of Trustees of the School, Eight Counselors, Chairman of the committee of Correspondence, Secretary of the committee of Correspondence, Chairman of the committee of Ways and Means, Secretary of the committee of Ways and Means.

2. If any of the officers of the Society should die, resign, or be displaced, the vacancy shall be filled up, by a new election, in the mode prescribed.

ART. II.

- 1 1 The stated meetings of the Society, shall be on the second Tuesday of the months of January, April, July, and November, at such places as shall, from time to time, be agreed on by the Society, and at the first stated meeting of the Society in every year, the Constitution shall be read, for the information of the members.
- 2 2. Special meetings of the Society may be called by the president, and, in his absence, by either of the vice-presidents, on application from the standing committee, or Trustees of the school, in writing, signed by their respective chairmen, in their behalf, or, on request of seven members of the Society, expressed in writing, and containing their reasons for such special meeting: and further, should all the officers be absent, then the power shall rest with the standing committee or trustees of the school of calling such meeting.
- 3 3. Sixteen members, with the president, or either of the vice-presidents, shall be a requisite number for transacting business; and should neither of the presiding officers be present, a president for the time may be chosen, who, with sixteen members, may proceed to the business of the meeting.
- 4 4. Should the secretary and assistant secretary be absent, the presiding officer may nominate, and the meeting appoint, two of the members present to act in their stead.

ART. III.

- 1 1. The President shall have authority to maintain order in the meetings of the Society, and to nominate the members of all committees, whose appointment or election is not otherwise provided for by the constitution.
- 2 2. The vice-presidents, in the absence of the president, shall have, according to their seniority, the same authority as is given to the president; and in case of his death, resignation, or removal, shall respectively officiate, until a new president be elected.

ART. IV.

- 1 1. It is the duty of the secretary to attend the meetings of the Society, to keep a record of their proceedings, and to cause to

be published such part of the proceedings as the Society may order, or the president, with the consent of the standing committee, (between the meetings of the Society) may direct. He is to notify the chairman of any special committee, of the names of the members of such committee, of the object of their appointment ; as also to give the name of every new member to the chairman and secretary of the committee of ways and means.

2. The assistant secretary is to attend the meetings of the Society, to assist the secretary in recording their proceedings, to give timely notice of all stated and special meetings, to notify every new member of his election, and present him with a certificate of his admission, together with a copy of this constitution, and receive his entrance fee, and account for the same to the chairman of the committee of ways and means.

3. In the absence of the secretary, all the duties of his office are to be performed by the assistant secretary ; and in the absence of the assistant secretary, his office is to be discharged by the secretary.

ART. V.

The treasurer shall be required by the Society to give security for the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in him. He is to keep regular accounts of all monies by him received and paid ; and shall pay no monies without an order, signed by the president, or in his absence by one of the vice-presidents, or in such manner as is hereinafter directed ; and his accounts shall be examined by a committee from the society, who shall be appointed at the meeting next preceding the annual election of officers, and report the state of the same.

ART. VI.

It is the duty of the register to preserve, in a book to be by him provided, an accurate copy of the charter and constitution of the Society ; to record therein the laws and regulations which may be made from time to time ; to keep an exact list of all the members of the Society, their occupations and places of abode ; to register all deeds or acts of Manumission, which may be presented to him for that purpose. And enrol the names of all Africans, and their descendants, who may have placed themselves under the patronage of the Society, or to whom their care shall be extended, and to take charge of the register hitherto kept for the purposes aforesaid.

ART. VII.

- 1 1. There shall be elected, by ballot, a standing committee, to consist of eighteen members, besides the chairman and secretary.
- 2 2. At the next stated meeting of the Society, after the adoption of this constitution, the two members first named on the committee shall go out of office, and a new appointment of the like number be made ; and at every stated meeting, thereafter, the same rule of election is to be observed, as to two other members of the committee, in the order in which they stand on the minutes.
- 3 3. The committee at every stated meeting of the Society, are to present a nomination of five persons, out of which nomination, all vacancies in the committee shall be filled up.
- 4 4. The standing committee are to meet, statedly in the first and third weeks of every month on the days and at the places the chairman shall appoint ; and at such other times as he shall direct or they require. Four of the committee with the chairman, shall be a sufficient number for the transaction of business ; and in the absence of the chairman, there shall be appointed a chairman for the time, who, with five members may in like manner proceed to business.
- 5 5. It is the duty of the standing committee, faithfully to execute all orders given to them by the society, and generally, to pursue such measures as appear to them best calculated to attain the ends of this institution. And they are to report their proceedings in writing to every stated meeting of the Society.
- 6 6. The standing committee are empowered to draw on the treasurer of the Society for any sum not exceeding fifty dollars. All orders for that purpose above twelve dollars and fifty cents, shall be agreed to by the majority of the members present at the time, and be signed by the chairman and attested by the secretary.
- 7 7. The chairman is authorised to draw on the treasurer for any sum not exceeding twelve dollars and fifty cents.
- 8 8. It is the duty of the chairman, to preside at the meetings of the committee, and to preserve order in their deliberations. He may call special meetings of the committee whenever he

may think proper, or when required so to do, by any two of the members. He is to sign all reports and other official papers ; and appoint, under his hand, during the recess of the committee, any of its members to take charge of such case, or cases, in which he may judge their interference necessary. In all meetings of the committee, he shall have a casting vote, and no other.

9. The duty of the secretary of the standing committee shall be, to keep fair and accurate minutes of their proceedings, and to preserve the papers and records, and, at the request of the chairman, to notify the members of the times and places of meeting : under the direction, and with the assistance of the chairman, he is to make the reports of the committee in writing to the Society.

10. The chairman and secretary are not required to take any further part in the business of the committee, than what has been already prescribed.

ART. VIII.

1. There shall be elected at the annual meeting a board of trustees for the African School, to consist of ten members, besides the chairman and secretary.

2. The trustees are to meet statedly, once in every month ; and at such other times as the chairman shall require, and at such places as he may direct, or the majority of them at any meeting shall appoint. Four of the members, with the chairman shall be a sufficient board to transact business ; and if the chairman be absent, five members, including a chairman to be appointed for the time, shall constitute a board.

3. The trustees are empowered to procure the necessary instructors, and to provide all necessary accommodations for the school, and to make contracts, for those purposes, which shall be binding on the Society ; and to draw on the treasurer at all times for such sum or sums of money as may be necessary for the support of the school. They may make any regulations, which, they may deem necessary for the due government of the school, and direct the course of studies and discipline therein. They may institute at the expense of the Society, such premiums as they may judge expedient for the encouragement of the scholars in their learning ; provided they do not exceed the sum of fifteen dollars in one year. They have power to regulate the admission of scholars on such terms for tuition as they may

think proper, and shall once in every three months, pay to the chairman or secretary of the committee of ways and means, all monies which they may have received for tuition during the preceeding quarter, and shall furnish the said chairman or secretary, at the same time, with a regular list of all sums then due the board, together with the names and place of residence of those persons who are responsible for the same.

4. It shall be the duty of the trustees to visit the school once in every month, to examine the scholars as to their proficiency and conduct, and to cause to be made, at each stated meeting of the Society, a written report of their proceeding, and of the state of the school, together with the sums of money drawn from the treasury, towards its support, and to give such further information respecting the school, and the objects of their appointment, which they may judge necessary, and at the first stated meeting, report the number of scholars admitted during the preceeding year.
5. The chairman shall preside at all meetings of the trustees, and preserve order therein ; and shall have a casting vote and no other. He may call special meetings, whenever he shall think proper, or when requested by any two of the trustees.—He is to sign all reports and other official acts of the board.
6. The secretary is to keep fair and regular minutes of the proceedings of the trustees ; to give notice to the trustees of the times and places of meeting ; and under the direction and with the assistance of the chairman, to prepare all reports to the society.

ART. IX.

It is the duty of the counsellors to advise the Society and its committees, in all doubtful cases ; and when required, to urge before such peasons, and courts, as may have authority to decide thereon, the claims to freedom of persons held in slavery, when the same shall appear to them legal.

ART. X.

1. At the annual meeting of the Society, there shall be elected by ballot, a committee of correspondence ; to consist of four members, besides a chairman and secretary.
2. It shall be the duty of the committee of correspondence to answer all letters addressed to the Society, which are refered to

them for that purpose ; and, generally, to correspond with other Societies, and with persons friendly to the abolition of slavery.

3. The duty of the chairman of the committee of correspondence shall be to convene the committee, whenever he may think necessary, or on application of any one of the members. He is to preside at the meetings of the committee, and preserve order therein ; but shall have no other than a casting vote.

4. The secretary is to preserve the papers of the committee ; keep copies, in a book to be provided, of all letters written, or communications made, by the committee, and a faithful record of all their proceedings ; and when required, to make report thereof to the Society.

ART. XI.

1. The Society shall at their annual meeting, elect by ballot, four members besides a chairman and secretary to be called a committee of ways and means.

2. The committee of ways and means shall meet at least once in every month on such day and place as the chairman shall direct.

3. It shall be the duty of the committee of ways and means, to collect all monies due or growing due to the society. They shall require of the trustees of the school, once in every three months, the payment of such sum or sums of money as they may have received for tuition during the preceding quarter, together with a regular list of all sums then due the board, and the names and place of residence of those persons who are responsible for the same. They shall call on the assistant secretary, and receive from him all such sums of money as he may have received for entrance fees. It shall be the duty of their chairman, prior to each of their regular meetings to call on the treasurer and ascertain the state of the funds of the Society, and should they require it, they shall take measures to replenish the same by public subscription or otherwise. They shall account the week previous to each stated meeting of the Society, to the treasurer for such monies as they may have received during the recess of the same. They shall inquire into and audit all accounts brought against the Society, and not otherwise provided for by the constitution, and the treasurer is authorised to pay the same upon their being signed by the chairman and attested by the secretary. They shall keep a book, in which shall be enter-

ed all their transactions, together with the dates and sums of money by them received, and shall report to the Society at each stated meeting their proceedings.

7 4. The treasurer ex-officio shall be a member of this committee, and shall receive notice with other members of the time and place of all their meetings.

8 5. It shall be the duty of the chairman to preside at the meetings of the committee, and preserve order during their deliberations, and in his absence, the Secretary on the application of any one member shall call a special meeting, and when assembled they shall appoint a chairman pro-tempore. The chairman is to sign all reports and other official acts of the committee.

9 6. It shall be the duty of the secretary to keep fair and accurate minutes of their transactions, to preserve all papers and documents relating to their proceedings, he shall notify the members of all meetings ordered by the chairman, and shall assist him in making up their reports, and attest the same.

ART. XII.

If any member of the standing committee or of the board of trustees, shall neglect to attend their meetings, or to perform the business thereof, without satisfactory reasons, it shall be made the duty of the committee, and of the board of trustees respectively, to report the same to the Society, and another member shall be elected in his stead.

ART. XIII.

1 1. Any person who is desirous to be admitted a member of this Society, shall be proposed at one of the stated meetings and be balloted for at the next stated meeting; and, on counting the ballots, if three fourths of the members present shall be found in his favour, he shall be declared a member.

2 2. The name of the person proposed shall be entered, with the name of the member who proposed him, in the minutes by the secretary.

3 3. Every person on being admitted a member, shall pay into the hands of the treasurer, three dollars; and every member of the Society shall pay the sum of two dollars yearly.

4. Honorary members may be admitted in the same manner 4
as resident members ; and shall be exempted from all payments ;
and shall be entitled to the same privileges as other members,
excepting the right of voting on any question.

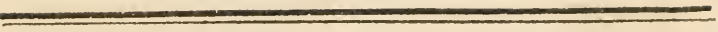
5. Any member of the Society who may be the owner of a 5
slave, shall forfeit the right of membership, unless he manumit
such slave, and no person owning a slave shall be admitted a
member.

ART. XIV.

The Society have the right of expelling any member, who af-
ter a fair and impartial examination, shall be found unworthy of
being connected with the institution ; provided three fourths
of the members present shall agree to such expulsion.

ART. XV.

No alteration shall be made in this constitution, unless no-
tice thereof, in writing, be given to the Society, one meeting, at
least, before the time proposed for making such alteration.



THE

BYE-LAWS

OF

The New-York Society,

FOR PROMOTING THE

Manumission of Slaves,

AND PROTECTING SUCH OF THEM AS HAVE BEEN, OR MAY

BE LIBERATED.





BYE-LAWS

Of The New-York Society, for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be liberated.

ART. I.

Sec. 1. A constitutional number of the members having assembled, the president, or, in his absence, either of the vice-presidents, or in their absence, a chairman for the evening, shall be appointed who shall call to order.

2. The members having come to order, the minutes of the last meeting shall be read, that if any mistake should have occurred, the same may be corrected.

ART. II.

1. The report of the standing committee shall be produced and read.

2. The report of the trustees of the school shall be produced and read.

3. The report from all special committees, in the order in which they stand on the minutes.

4. Committees appointed to report on a subject referred to them, by the Society, shall report a state of facts in writing, and also their opinions thereon.

ART. III.

1. When two or more members shall rise at the same time, for the purpose of speaking, the president, or presiding officer shall decide, who has the preference.

2. Every member, wishing to speak, shall rise in his place and address the chair ; and shall be considered out of order to act otherwise.

3. No member shall speak more than twice to any question, unless to explain, or having permission so to do from the president ; nor more than once, until every member desirous of speaking, shall have been heard.

4. No question or motion shall be debated, or past, unless the same be seconded. When a motion is seconded, it shall be stated by the president for debate, and every such motion shall be reduced to writing, if desired by any member.

5. After a motion is stated by the president, it shall be deemed to be in possession of the Society, but the same may be withdrawn, at any time before decision or amendment.

6. When a question is under debate no motion shall be received unless,

- 1st. To amend the same,
- 2d. To committee it,
- 3d. To postpone it to a certain day,
- 4th. For the previous question,
- 5th. To adjourn.

7. A motion to adjourn, shall always be considered in order, and the same shall be put, and decided, without debate.

ART. IV.

1. The previous question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments and debates of the main questions, and shall be in form, " shall the main question now be put."

ART. V.

1. A motion for commitment, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments of the main question.

ART. VI.

1. Every member who shall be present, when a question is put, shall vote for or against the same, unless the Society shall excuse him, or he be immediately interested in the question, in which case he shall not vote.

ART. VII.

1. A member called to order, shall sit down, unless permitted to explain, and the Society if appealed to, shall decide without debate. Should no appeal be made, the decision of the president shall be considered as acquiesced in.

2. All questions shall be put in the order in which they are submitted. Except in filling up blanks, when the same shall be put on the largest number, or longest time first.

ART. VIII.

1. The question for re-consideration having been put, and negatived, it shall not be renewed a second time, without the unanimous consent of the Society.

ART. IX.

1. The president or presiding officer, shall have the casting vote, where the members present are equally divided; but in the election of officers, or on all questions where more than a majority is required, in the affirmative by the constitution, he shall there have a vote in common with the other members.

ART. X.

1. After the regular business shall be gone through, new propositions, either for the consideration of the Society, or for membership shall be next in order.

2. Election of officers, or filling up vacancies in the standing, or other committees shall next succeed.

3. Balloting for persons proposed for membership, at a previous meeting, shall be left for the last business of the Society when convened.

ART. XI.

No member shall leave the room, for the purpose of absenting himself from a meeting of the Society, without first obtaining permission from the presiding officer.

FINIS.

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